DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 100 552 RC 008 242

AUTHOR	Jones, Lewis W.
TITLE	Rural Research Needs.
INSTITUTION	Tuskegee Inst., Ala.
PUB DATE	73
NOTE	15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Regional Demographic Group (Fall 1972)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Comparative Analysis; Correlation; *Data Bases; Demography; Information Dissemination; Information Retrieval; *Methods; Program Improvement; Public Policy; Research Design; *Research Needs; *Rural Areas; Social Systems; *Sociology; Standards

ABSTRACT

The following rural sociological research needs were identified: (1) acceptance of general sociological theory and methodology for use in "Rural" research; (2) recognition of bench marks and probable base lines in rural sociological research; (3) collection of widely scattered reports for examination and perhaps respecification; (4) establishment of a systematic data base relevant to modernization of conceptualizations of obsolescent connotations of rurality; (5) development of a program of research into the realities of contemporary life in nonmetropolitan population aggregations. Belief that basic and applied research are not mutually exclusive was emphasized to indicate the need applied research has for utilizing basic research in rural sociological study. Research areas identified were: (1) residuals (urban population and demographic studies); (2) marginality (process of social change producing alienation from the mainstream); (3) quality of life (conditions of life plus means of improvement); (4) manifest and latent functions (appraisal of intent, content, and results of public policy and purposive programs at all levels); (5) innovation and diffusion. Information linkage, requiring clearinghouse function (activities, program, and research made available to research designers), was seen as the desired goal. (JC)

ED100552

Acc 13 10-75

RURAL RESEARCH NEEDS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

by

Lewis W. Jones, Director
Rural Development
Research Center
Tuskegee Institute

DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE RESEARCH
TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE
AUGUST 1973

Ac003242

0002

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FOREWORD

Tuskegee Institute has had a long history of scholarly concern for the people and the soil of rural America. This scholarly concern has been coupled with an equally intense concern for service to the people who make up the rural communities in Southeast United States. The founder of Tuskegee Institute first went among the people of the surrounding community to assess their needs and hopes and to devise instructional programs to serve those needs and hopes. Few academic institutions in our nation, if any, have interlaced more effectively than has Tuskegee Institute the three major functions of higher education institutions, i.e., instruction, research, and public service.

Tuskegee Institute's success in working with the land and its people has led to Tuskegee's selection as the locale for a Rural Development Research Center to serve the Southeast. This Center aims at promoting a cooperative effort by the Land Grant Colleges and Universities in the Southeast to find solutions to the pressing problems of rural development.

Dr. Lewis Wade Jones, Director of the Rural Development Research Center, has played a prominent role in the research and teaching efforts at Tuskegee Institute for a quarter century. He is a rural sociologist trained at Fisk University and Columbia University with a record of unique accomplishments in his discipline. This paper which follows is only the first of many which will come out of the Rural Development Research Center.

John Chavis, Director
Division of Behavioral
Science Research
Tuskegee Institute
September, 1973

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Lewis Wade Jones was born in Cuero, Texas. He received his A.B. from Fisk University, and his M.A. and Ph. D from Columbia University. He has taught at Fisk University, and Colorado College, Colorado Springs. He is presently professor of Rural Sociology at Tuskegee Institute.

Dr. Jones is the author of various articles and of a book, Cold Rebellion: The South's Oligarchy in Revolt, (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1962)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

INTRODUCTION

I approach this discussion with some confidence because I do not rely on my observations alone, nor do I have to project my judgment without critical appraisal. In the past six weeks it has been my good fortune to study papers, prepared by responsible scholars that bear on the subject. While I may not quote these authors, I draw upon them in making this presentation.

Since I am not a newcomer to the field of rural sociological research, there is less risk of this paper crashing through open doors. I hope to spare you bright-eyed discoveries of the known or the re-invention of the already used and well-worn. Some of my recent experiences preclude a contemporary provincialism. Perhaps a drawback may be that my approach savors of the consciousness of how much less I know now than once I thought I did and recognition in some of my younger colleagues of such pristine assurance.

Rural sociological research needs include:

1. Acceptance of general sociological theory and methodology for use in "Rural" research
2. Recognition of bench marks and probable base lines in rural sociological research
3. Pulling together widely scattered reports for examination and perhaps respecification
4. Establishment of a systematic data base relevant to modernization of conceptualizations of obsolescent connotations of rurality
5. Development of a program of research into the realities of contemporary life in non-metropolitan population aggregations - towns, villages, communities

---

This paper was first presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Regional Demographic Group in fall 1972.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BENCH MARKS AND BASE LINES

I am suggesting several bench marks and base lines to which you certainly may make additions: Twenty-five years ago my mentor, Edmund de S. Brunner, published a small volume, The Growth of a Science: A Half-Century of Rural Sociological Research in the United States. This is the same Professor Brunner who, with J. H. Kolb, prepared a report on Rural Social Trends (1933), followed by Rural Trends in Depression Years, in collaboration with Irving Lorge (1937). Professor Brunner reported:

> All told, up to 1956 more than 1000 known rural social studies have appeared as separate publications. Well over 90 percent of these have been reviewed by the present writer for the purpose of surveying their total contributions and describing methodological and theoretical developments of the field. In addition all issues of of Rural Sociology have been examined carefully as have the smaller number of research studies publiched as books; between 1500 and 1600 titles in all.

Some of Professor Brunner's conclusions about needs have in some measure been met, especially those about population research:

> ....it appears quite likely that the number of studies in some of the areas of demography will increase, since they illustrate interests and problems arising from newer developments. It also appears that while descriptive and trend studies will continue, there is a tendency to push toward more satisfying explorations of some population phenomena, or least to develop

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

hypotheses through relating more kinds of data to population facts and using more refined statistical techniques.

Some apprehension was expressed in this volume that has not been entirely allayed:

> Does this attitude mean that rural sociology will develop increasingly as an applied discipline, a useful handmaiden on occasion for action agencies, at other times a tolerated pensioner, and at no time contributing to the advancement of sociology as such?

One problem of rural sociological research has been the relative infrequency with which states have attacked the same topic with identical or similar study designs and techniques. This is to some degree inevitable. Each state naturally focuses on its own situation. and this varies among states. The new regional committees, to which allusion was made earlier, will help to remedy this situation and should result in more joint planning and effort. But certain problems and conditions of rural life are common to large numbers of states. A science is built by replication - and replication in the same areas of regular intervals to measure trends. Moreover, some hypotheses with respect to rural social life are geniunely testable only on at least a regional basis.

In the late 1930's I was responsible for the rural descriptive material in a volume published in 1941 - Statistical Atlas of Southern Counties. A tri-partite classification identified each of 1104 counties:

> Taken by itself, a particular classification may not give an adequate understanding of a county's underlying economic organization, but the three classifications in combination should make it possible to appraise the extent to

which counties in each type share any feature of culture that has been adequately investigated in any of the other counties conforming to type. For this identification purpose, a combination symbol consisting of three parts, each part based on one of the previously defined classifications, has been developed to designate county-types, and is recapitulated below as follows:

Major Crop Type

A. Cotton
B. Crop-Speciality
C. Self-Sufficing
D. Grain-Livestock-Dairying
E. Vegetable-Fruit
I. Predominantly Non-farm
X. Unclassified

Crop Subtype

0. Unclassified
1. One Dominant Crop System
2. Dual System of Major Crops
3. Multiple Crop Systems

Urban-Industrial Type

1. Metropolitan City County
2. Small Metropolis County
3. Small City County
4. Large Town County
5. Small Town, Industrial County
6. Small Town, Non-Industrial County
7. Rural, Industrial County
8. Rural, Non-Industrial County

An appendix gives the rural classification and the criteria on which it was based. This may have value in studying social change by using comparative data from four census enumerations made since this work was done.

There are several basic works in rural sociological

research upon which contemporary students might profitably draw. Southern Regions of the United States by Howard W. Odum (1936), Human Factors in Cotton Culture by Rupert B. Vance (1929) and by the same author Human Geography of the South (1932). It may serve us well to exhume the reports, other than Southern Regions, of the Southern Regional Committee of the Social Science Research Council. There were done a series of reports in the beginnings of the "agricultural adjustment program" of the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration with response to specific crops - "Cotton and the AAA", etc. For students interested in establishing base lines, Southern Regions and the Statistical Atlas have strong bibliographies and the latter lists unpublished county studies.

DATA RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

The current quickened interest in rural development as it is politically motivated may be expected to stimulate activity labeled research. Practitioners of varied competencies may be called upon to undertake studies. Meaningful work on their part will depend upon the data base they use. This data should include statistics in a regional data bank upon which individuals or research teams can draw without the effort to develop data banks at small institutions or even make the investment that would be necessary to have a specialty bank at some large institutions.

A well planned system of programming and retrieval for rural area research would have to be predicated on an explicit theoretical and conceptual framework. Aspects of this framework are suggested by Kenneth Wilkinson[2], in his discussion of community development as positive but nevertheless narrower than the conceptualization of community change. Instead of the field theory approach of Wilkinson and Kaufman[3], there is that of Padfield who takes the view that development must not only be conceptulized in terms of dynamic processes of change, but in terms of static processes or equilibrium. Other con-

ceptualization of social change impress us with the need expressed in the report of the Study Group on an Institute for Applied Science and Social Change in Rural Area for "conceptual coherence".

In addition to a bank providing a statistical data base, research would be facilitated by the accumulation of information about published and unpublished research completed and on-going, and would offer the opportunity for replication and adaptation of designs. The Study Group just referred to concluded that there is a need for "informational linkage"...."Nowhere, as far as the Study Group could determine, does there exist an applied science institution concerned with the entire spectrum of of interlinked rural issues. In contrast, scores, perhaps hundreds of organizations have responsibilities in one or another area of rural life."

Much that the Study Group (see appendix for composition of Study Group) reported, particularly its focus on Meta-Systems, has research implications. The information -linkage requires a clearing house function whereby activities - program and research - are made available to those designing research.

RURAL RESEARCH AREAS

1. Residuals. In urban population research and demographic studies from an urban perspective the residual category or categories are not slag heaps but with a proper conceptual framework may be mined with profit for sociological knowledge.

2. Marginality. Study of the process of social change by which individuals, families, communities, and classes of people become alienated from mainstream society with explication of the several components of the process - economic, social, cultural and psychological. Macro-analysis supplemented with micro-analysis in a Durkheimian explanation of the particular aggregated into the general.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

3. Quality of Life. Statements on the problems of rural living are incomplete if they fail to recognize the interrelations between all aspects of rural life. Investigation of any topical area must include considerations of these interrelations.

> Social systems are undergoing rapid changes, and research concerned with the quality of rural living must be conducted in the midst of these changes. Before research data are collected, the social systems should be defined for research purposes. The definitions would help determine the kinds of data that should be collected and how they should be aggregated and analyzed.
>
> Future research on the quality or rural living should be concerned not only with conditions of life but also with the means whereby undesirable conditions can be improved. Too often in the past, investigators have collected data without adequately considering how the data could be used for social actions.[4]

There is research in process on The Quality of Life in the Rural South; known as the S79 Project of the Cooperative States Research Service, whose result may be anticipated to open up further study.

4. Manifest and Latent Functions. What is happening in non-metropolitan America as related to specification of public policy and purposive programs at all levels of operation of public policy and purposive programs at all levels of operation with rigid appraisal of intent, content and results. Research appraisal would include focus on "evaluation" claims of vested agency interests. To quote Kuvlesky[5]:

> We need to lend our assistance to evaluative research of experimental educational programs aimed at restricted targets or functions (whether or not we agree with them) so we can objectively evaluate in-

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

tended consequences and reveal unintended ones of both + and - valance. Surely most so-called deliberate social experiments are rarely thoroughly studied by mental observers.

5. Innovation and Diffusion. Taken together, Sociological Perspectives of Domestic Development[6] and Planning for Innovation through Dissemination and Utilization of Knowledge[7], may make some contribution to research design that will give a different dimension to rural studies.

CONCLUSION

There are evidences of the persistence of the apprehension expressed by Professor Brunner fifteen years ago over rural sociology becoming increasingly an applied discipline, a useful handmaiden for action agencies. However, the question now is not if research may have the handmaiden function but one of priorities in which research related to applied concerns has great significance. The outcome of multi-million dollar programs and the meaningfulness of frenetic activity on the part of the legion of planners and programmers will depend upon the knowledge of what they are doing as provided by research. There is ongoing serious discussion of this in many circumstances of concern. The results of one of the more recent expression of this concern are presented in Research Application in Rural Economic Development and Planning.[8]

Basic research and applied research are not mutually exclusive when our hardware has the degree of sophistication it has. In this brief statement I have attempted to indicate software needs to utilize the hardware. There may be expected increasing pressure for specified research from clients on their demand. Organization to supply these demands can be affected while at the same time educating clients in the kind of research that will have the highest benefits for them ultimately. Underlying all of this is the need for intellectual integrity among researchers that justifies the indentification "scientist".

Footnotes:

1 Olaf F. Larson, Director, Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, Cornell University; Harland Padfield, Director, Western Region Area Development Research Center, Oregon State University; Earl O. Heady, Director, North Central Center for Agricultural and Rural Development, Iowa State University.

2 "A Field Theory Perspective for Community Development Research", Rural Sociology 37:1, March, 1972, p. 40-51.

3 Kaufman, Harold F., "Toward An Interaction Conception of Community", Social Forces 38:8-17.

4 The Quality of Rural Living: Proceedings of a Workshop, National Academy of Sciences, 1971.

5 William P. Kuvlesky and Rowan Stutz, The Relationship Between Educational Policy and Rural Development Needs: A Conceptual Overview. Paper delivered to Third World Congress on Rural Sociology, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, August, 1972, p. 17.

6 George M. Beal, Ronald C. Powers, and E. Walter Coward, Eds., Iowa State Univ. Press, 1971.

7 Ronald Havelock

8 Oklahoma State University Agricultural Experiment Station Research Report, p. 665, July, 1972.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX

Members of the
Study Group on an Institute for Applied Science and Social Change in Rural Area

C. West Churchman, Chairman, Associate Director, Space Sciences Laboratory, University of California at Berkeley

Marvin Adelson, Information Transfer Corporation, Santa Monica

Stanley Andrews, International Consultant

Charles E. Bishop, Vice President of Research and Public Service Programs, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Hendrik W. Bode, Gordon McKay Professor of Systems Engineering, Harvard University

James C. Bresee, Assistant Director for General Energy Development, Division of Applied Technology, U.S. AEC

Lewis W. Jones, Professor of Sociology, Tuskegee Institute

Mark S. Massel, Consultant

Alex P. Mercure, State Program Director, Home Education Livelihood Program, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Donald N. Michael, Professor of Psychology, Planning and Public Policy and Program Director, Center for Research on Utilization of Scientific Knowledge, University of Michigan

Arthur T. Mosher, President, Agricultural Development Council, New York

Richard C. Snyder, Professor of Administration and Political Science, University of California at Irvine

James L. Sundquist, Senior Staff, Governmental Studies, Brookings Institution

William F. Whyte, Professor of Industrial Relations, Cornell University

Vincent P. Rock, National Academy of Sciences